



American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine

Advancing the Science of Comfort ~ Affirming the Art of Caring

March 28, 2005

The Honorable Bill Nelson
US Senate
Hart Senate Office Building
Room 716
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Nelson:

On behalf of the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine, I would like to offer the strongest support for the "Advance Directives Improvement and Education Act of 2005", S.347, and to thank you for introducing it. We particularly applaud the fact that it recognizes the value of physicians spending time talking to patients and families about advance care planning. Reimbursement for these cognitive activities encourages physicians to spend the time needed to educate patients about this important topic. This issue is of great importance to the delivery of care to seriously ill persons both on an individual and national basis, and could not be more timely.

The AAHPM is the pre-eminent organization of physicians and other medical professionals committed to the furthering and fostering the practice of hospice and palliative medicine. We believe that the medical profession should attend to all the needs of the patient with life limiting or threatening illness and his/her family. Honest and open family conversations and the execution of advance directives are the most effective methods of promoting that autonomy that we Americans value so highly.

Again, we thank you and your cosponsors for the introduction of this important legislation and strongly support its passage. The AAHPM looks forward to working with you in these efforts.

Robert Arnold, MD
President
American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine